LIBRARY
MAR 1 8 1998
National Marine Fisheries Service
2570 Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

Tuna Newsletter

National Marine Fisheries Service
- Southwest Region
- Southwest Fisheries Science Center

February 1998 **Issue 128**

IN THIS ISSUE

- U.S. Pacific Tuna Catch 1
- U.S. Canned Tuna Industry Highlights, Second Quarter 1998 2
- U.S. Tuna Fisheries Update..... 3
- The Mexican Tuna Fishery on Floating Objects..... 5
- Recent Developments in Tuna Fisheries: News from Around the World 6

25th Anniversary Edition

U.S. TUNA STATISTICS

Editor's note: The following articles were prepared by NMFS personnel from data and information gathered from sources in the U.S. tuna industry and government.

U.S. PACIFIC TUNA CATCH

A year-end "flash estimate" of catches based on incomplete statistics, assumptions on trends in the fisheries and from information gathered from personnel monitoring the fisheries was made by the SWFSC for the 1997 U.S. commercial tuna fisheries in the Pacific Ocean. We share this information (Table 1) with readers and note that the estimate of 206,600 mt of tunas caught in 1997 is up slightly from the 199,300 mt caught in 1996. Albacore, bluefin and skipjack tuna catches declined in 1997, compared to 1996, while bigeye and yellowfin tuna showed strong gains. Seventy-nine percent of the 1997 catch came from the central-western Pacific. The species caught in greatest quantities Pacific-wide was skipjack

Table 1. Estimated U.S. commercial Pacific Ocean tuna catches (mt) for 1996 and 1997. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Fishing Region	Yellowfin		Skipjack		Bigeye	
	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
E. Tropical	10,700	9,500	12,600	12,700	5,200	4,400
Central-Western	21,200	43,500	115,000	97,400	12,600	23,000
Total	31,800	53,000	127,500	110,100	17,800	27,400

Fishing Region	Albacore		Bluefin	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
Northern	16,700	12,700	3,300	2,000
Southern	2,200	1,400	0	0
Total	18,900	14,100	3,300	2,000

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled-and-gutted and 2.25 for loins.

Table 2. Total U.S. cannery receipts (st) by species for the second quarters of 1996 and 1997. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Apr-Jun	Type	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
1996	ROUND	21,000	48,900	14,200	84,100
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	0	100	100
	LOIN	*	8,500	3,800	12,300
	TOTAL (as received)	21,100	57,400	18,000	96,400
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	21,100	68,000	22,700	111,800
1997	ROUND	28,200	37,400	14,600	80,200
	GILLED & GUTTED	0	0	200	200
	LOIN	400	6,800	3,300	10,600
	TOTAL (as received)	28,600	44,200	18,100	91,000
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	29,200	52,800	22,400	104,300

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.
[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.
[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled-and-gutted and 2.25 for loins.

Table 3. Total U.S. cannery receipts (st) by species for the first two quarters of 1996 and 1997. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Jun	Source	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
1996	ROUND	48,300	86,000	33,400	167,800
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	0	600	600
	LOIN	*	13,500	6,400	19,900
	TOTAL (as received)	48,400	99,500	40,300	188,200
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	48,400	116,400	48,400	213,200
1997	ROUND	49,200	78,500	27,600	155,300
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	0	600	600
	LOIN	500	10,100	6,400	17,000
	TOTAL (as received)	49,700	88,600	34,600	172,900
	TOTAL (round weight)[2]	50,300	101,100	42,700	194,200

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.
[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.
[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled-and-gutted and 2.25 for loins.

Table 4. U.S. cannery receipts (st) of domestic and imported tuna by species for the second quarters of 1996, 1997 and the recent (1992-96) second quarter averages. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Apr-Jun	Source	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
		TOTAL CANNERY RECEIPTS (ALL LOCATIONS)			
1996	DOMESTIC	700	28,000	8,300	37,000
	IMPORTED	20,300	29,400	9,700	59,400
	TOTAL	21,100	57,400	18,000	96,400
1997	DOMESTIC	700	29,100	11,300	41,200
	IMPORTED	27,900	15,100	6,800	49,800
	TOTAL	28,600	44,200	18,100	91,000
1992-96 Average	DOMESTIC	500	32,800	10,500	43,900
	IMPORTED	24,600	23,500	10,300	58,400
	TOTAL	25,100	56,300	20,800	102,200

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

tuna at 110,100 mt, followed by yellowfin tuna (53,000 mt) and bigeye tuna (27,400 mt).

U.S. CANNED TUNA INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS, SECOND QUARTER 1997

Total receipts of tuna by U.S. canners during the second quarter of 1997 (April-June) decreased by 7% to the equivalent of 104,300 short tons (st) of whole fish (round weight), compared to the second quarter of 1996 (Table 2). The principal species received was skipjack tuna with 51% of the total, followed by albacore and yellowfin tuna with 28% and 21% of the total, respectively. Albacore receipts were up by 34%, while skipjack tuna receipts were down by 22% and yellowfin tuna receipts were virtually unchanged.

Receipts for the first two quarters of 1997 totaled 194,200 st, down 9% from the previous year (Table 3). Albacore receipts were up by 4%, while skipjack and yellowfin tuna receipts were down by 13% and 12%, respectively.

Although the vast majority of tuna received by U.S. canners is whole fish, some quantity is received as loins or gilled-and-gutted. Receipts of tuna loins for the second quarter of 1997 were down by 14%, while receipts of loins for the first two quarters were down by 15%. (Loins and gilled-and-gutted receipts are converted to round weight receipts by factors of 2.25 and 1.11, respectively. For this article, unconverted receipts are used unless otherwise stated.)

Domestic deliveries to U.S. canners for the second quarter of 1997 increased by 11%, while imported deliveries decreased by 16% (Table 4). Skipjack tuna was the largest component of all domestic deliveries at 29,100 st. Imports outpaced domestic deliveries by 8,600 st.

Table 5. U.S. cannery receipts (st) of domestic and imported tuna by species for the first two quarters of 1996, 1997 and the recent (1992-96) averages. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Jun	Source	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
		TOTAL CANNERY RECEIPTS (ALL LOCATIONS)			
1996	DOMESTIC	2,200	53,700	20,000	76,000
	IMPORTED	46,200	45,800	20,300	112,300
	TOTAL	48,400	99,500	40,300	188,200
1997	DOMESTIC	1,600	57,200	19,900	78,700
	IMPORTED	48,100	31,400	14,700	94,200
	TOTAL	49,700	88,600	34,600	172,900
1992-96 Average	DOMESTIC	2,000	67,800	21,100	90,900
	IMPORTED	46,600	42,300	20,200	109,200
	TOTAL	48,700	110,100	41,300	200,100

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

Table 6. U.S. cannery imports (st) of tuna by species and source (flag of catcher vessel) for the second quarter of 1997. Totals for the second quarter of 1996 are given for comparison. Note that the flag of the catcher vessel does not necessarily reflect the country of export or point of shipment. Totals may not add due to rounding.

VESSEL FLAG	April-June 1997				1996
	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
AUSTRALIA	100	0	*	100	*
BELIZE	100	200	200	500	800
BRAZIL	0	1,200	0	1,200	0
COOK ISLANDS	100	0	0	100	0
ECUADOR	0	1,700	2,700	4,400	3,700
FS MICRONESIA	0	1,000	300	1,300	900
FRANCE	200	*	*	300	100
FRENCH POLYNESIA	100	0	0	100	*
GHANA	0	700	200	900	2,500
JAPAN	5,100	*	0	5,100	2,700
NEW ZEALAND	1,200	*	0	1,200	2,300
PANAMA	400	*	100	500	400
PHILIPPINES	0	100	100	200	0
SIERRA LEONE	0	300	600	900	1,600
SOUTH AFRICA	1,300	0	0	1,300	900
SOUTH KOREA	200	2,400	600	3,200	13,000
TAIWAN	18,600	4,900	300	23,800	21,800
USA	0	600	400	1,000	1,800
VANUATU	0	300	300	600	2,700
WESTERN SAMOA	500	*	100	700	100
UNKNOWN	0	1,500	1,100	2,600	0
OTHER	100	*	*	100	4,100
TOTAL	27,900	15,100	6,800	49,800	59,400

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

For the first two quarters of 1997, domestic deliveries increased by 4% from the previous year, while imported deliveries decreased by 16% (Table 5). Imports accounted for 54% of the tuna delivered to U.S. canners.

Albacore was the leading import for the second quarter of 1997 at 27,900 st, followed by skipjack and yellowfin tuna at 15,100 st and 6,800 st, respectively (Table 6). The leading supplier was Taiwan, with 48% of the import market, followed by Japan and Ecuador with 10% and 9% of the market, respectively.

The western Pacific Ocean was the source of 64% of the tuna received by U.S. canners during the second quarter of 1997 (Table 7). The next greatest sources were the eastern Pacific and eastern Atlantic oceans, accounting for 14% and 11% of the tuna received by U.S. canners, respectively.

U.S. TUNA FISHERIES UPDATE

EASTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

During 1997 the U.S. tropical tuna fleet in the eastern Pacific caught an estimated 9,500 metric tons (mt) of yellowfin tuna, 12,700 mt of skipjack tuna and 4,400 mt of bigeye tuna (Figure 1). The yellowfin tuna catch was down 18%, the skipjack tuna catch was up 1%, and the bigeye tuna catch was down 12% compared to the same period in 1996. Production for both 1996 and 1997 was predominantly from eight large (greater than 800 st capacity) purse seiners.

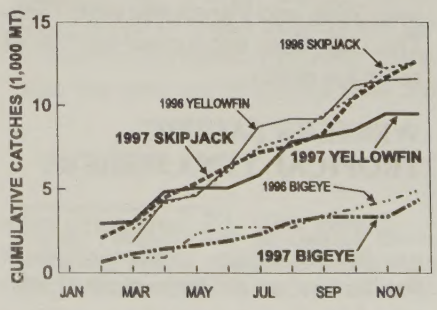

Figure 1. Cumulative catches, by month, for the U.S. eastern tropical Pacific tuna fleet, 1996 and 1997. (Note that data are not available for the first two months of 1996 and the first month of 1997.)

Table 7. Receipts (st) of tuna by U.S. canneries by species and area of capture for the second quarters of 1996 and 1997. Totals may not add due to rounding.

SOURCE	Albacore		Skipjack		Yellowfin[1]	
	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997
E. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	4,600	8,400	4,700	1,000	2,600	800
TOTAL	4,600	8,400	4,700	1,000	2,600	800
W. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	*	0	*	0	*
IMPORTED	5,700	5,900	*	1,200	*	0
TOTAL	5,700	5,900	*	1,200	*	*
E. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	*	1,600	2,100	2,300	2,000
IMPORTED	0	0	4,000	4,200	3,300	4,700
TOTAL	0	*	5,600	6,400	5,600	6,700
W. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	700	700	26,300	27,000	6,100	9,300
IMPORTED	7,500	11,000	20,700	8,600	3,700	1,400
TOTAL	8,200	11,700	47,100	35,600	9,800	10,700
INDIAN OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	2,600	2,600	0	*	0	0
TOTAL	2,600	2,600	0	*	0	0

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.
[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

The surface fleets (purse seiners and baitboats) of all nations fishing in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean in 1997 caught an estimated 262,900 mt of yellowfin tuna, 145,300 mt of skipjack tuna and 47,100 mt of bigeye tuna. The leading nation was Mexico with 33% of the total catch, followed by Ecuador with 20% and Venezuela with 15%. The U.S. fleet accounted for 6% of the tuna catch.

WESTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

During 1997 U.S. tuna purse seiners fishing in the western tropical Pacific landed an estimated 97,400 mt of skipjack tuna and a combined 63,500 mt of yellowfin and bigeye tuna (Figure 2). The skipjack tuna landings were down 15% and the combined yellowfin and bigeye tuna landings were up 106% from the 1996 landings for the same period. Thirty-three vessels landed tuna from 178 trips in 1997 compared to 40 vessels and 158 trips in 1996.

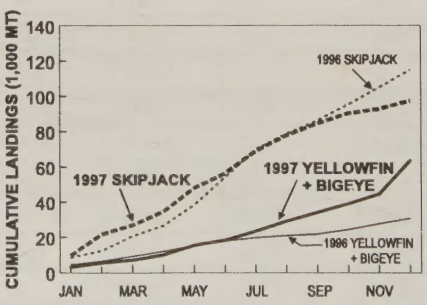

Figure 2. Cumulative tuna landings, by month, for the U.S. western tropical Pacific purse seine fishery, 1996 and 1997.

(Report provided by Doug Prescott, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)

NORTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1997 U.S. North Pacific albacore troll season began in May north of Midway Island and ended in early November along the U.S. West Coast. Numerous schools of albacore were scattered throughout the offshore fishing areas but high daily catches were sporadic. Abnormal ocean temperatures were prevalent throughout the North Pacific fishing areas. Water temperatures in the offshore areas (1,000-2,000 miles off Oregon) were as much as 4°F below normal, while coastal water temperatures were abnormally warm. Albacore landings for the 1997 fishery totaled 11,550 mt, compared to 15,600 mt landed in 1996.

The average weight of troll-caught albacore was approximately 6.7 kg. Large numbers of small fish (3.5-4.5 kg) began appearing in catches in mid-season. Transshipment vessels made four trips from the grounds to the canneries in American Samoa. One NMFS observer accompanied a troll vessel to collect fisheries and research information.

Many changes resulted from a large influx of vessels into the fishery. Several U.S. ports are now available for Canadian vessels to land their fish, and several Canadian ports are available to U.S. boats. Voluntary daily radio reports on fishing conditions have been sharply curtailed due to crowding of vessels in areas where radio reports announced high catches. Several vessels reported high numbers of gillnet-scarred fish. Two illegal high-seas driftnet vessels were sighted by the fleet and reported to the U.S. Coast Guard.

A complete summary of the 1996 U.S. albacore fishery is available by request. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

SOUTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1997-98 U.S. South Pacific albacore troll fishery began in December 1997. Spotty catches were reported in December by several U.S. vessels. Approximately 25 to 30 U.S. troll vessels are expected to fish in the South Pacific this season. Two fishing vessels will be collecting data on the ocean structure in the southeast Pacific for the American Fisherman's Research Foundation (AFRF). The fishing grounds extend from approximately 140°W to 160°W along 40°S latitude.

Approximately 1,400 mt of albacore were landed by 37 U.S. vessels in the 1996-97 fishery. Catches for recent years have been considerably below the fishery's ten-year historical average of 2,400 mt. Logbooks and length-frequency data for this fishery are collected by the NMFS/SWR field office in Pago Pago, American Samoa. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY

For the 1997 U.S. commercial western Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery 5,501 fish were landed with a gross weight of 1,035.3 mt and an average weight of 414.9 pounds per fish. A total of 1,211 vessels reported catch in 1997. The number of vessels with reported catch by category are General, 1,027; Incidental, 119; Angling (Trophy), 31; Harpoon, 27; Purse Seine, 5; and Reserve, 2. A summary of the landings is given in Table 8.

The newly formed Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel (HMS AP) met for the second time on January 11 and 12, 1998, in Baltimore, Maryland. At this meeting, the HMS AP discussed quota allocation and effort controls for the Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery. The HMS AP was formed to meet requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and to assist the NMFS in evaluating options for the management of Atlantic tunas, sharks, and swordfish. *(Report provided by Pat Scida, NMFS Northeast Region, Gloucester, MA)*

Table 8. U.S. commercial landings of Atlantic bluefin tuna for 1997.

Category	Number of Fish	Avg. Wt. (lbs.)	Gross Wt. (mt)	Adjusted Quota (mt)
GENERAL	3,668	408.4	679.4	703
Handline	84	448.0	17.1	
Rod & Reel	3,320	410.0	617.4	
Harpoon	264	375.0	44.9	
HARPOON	288	403.2	52.7	53
INCIDENTAL	240	448.1	48.8	53
Longline	225	457.7	46.7	52
North	116	369.7	19.5	20
South	109	551.3	27.3	32
Other	15	304.4	2.1	1
PURSE SEINE	1,271	433.0	249.6	250
ANGLING)[1]	31	309.5	4.4	6
North	3	380.0	0.5	2
South	28	301.9	3.8	4
RESERVE	3	368.0	0.5	20
TOTAL	5,501	414.9	1,035.3	1,085

[1]Records Large Medium and Giant size class (Trophy); does not include School, Large School or Small Medium size class tuna harvested in Angling Category.

REPORTS

Editor's note: Original reports are published as a service to subscribers and may not represent the views of the NMFS. Readers should contact the authors of reports for details, if needed.

THE MEXICAN TUNA FISHERY ON FLOATING OBJECTS

Sofía Ortega García[1] *and Alejandro Zárate Villafranco*[1,2]

One of the modes of fishing in the Eastern Pacific Ocean tuna fishery is to exploit the nature of tuna to associate with floating objects. Fishermen search for floating objects under which commonly can be found a school of tuna (Figure 3). If such a floating object-tuna school association is found, the net is set around the floating object, capturing the fish. If no tuna are immediately detected in association with a floating object, the fishermen may drift with the object until early the next day to see if tuna will eventually appear.

There are many types of such floating objects: trees or branches, dead whales, discarded fishing gear, boats, rafts, buoys, plastic items, etc. Some of these objects are deposited in the ocean by rivers, therefore the amount of rainfall over the

[1]Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas (CICIMAR), Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Apdo. 592, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Cp 23000, Mexico.

[2] Programa Nacional de Aprovechamiento del Atún y Protección a los Delfines.

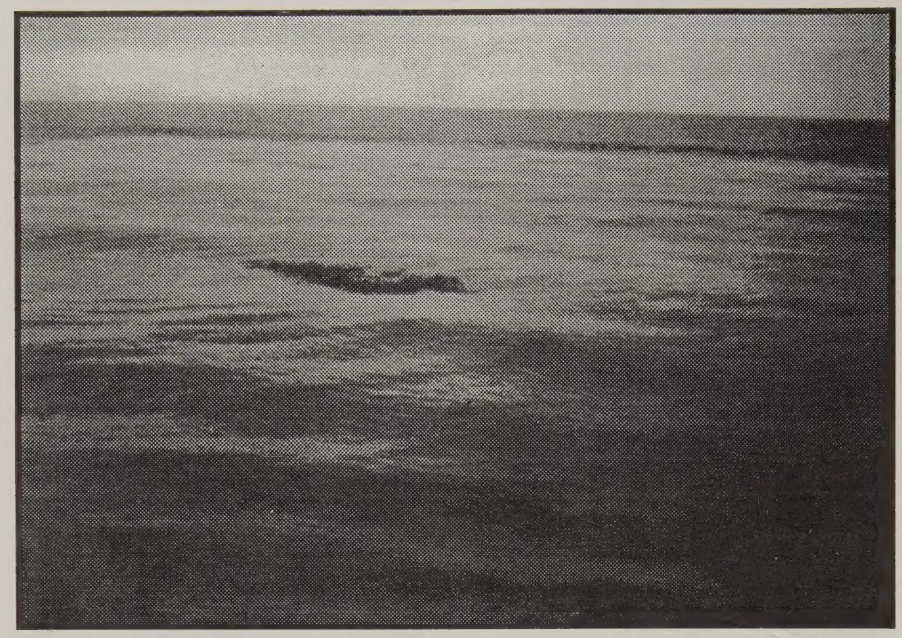

Figure 3. Floating objects such as kelp patties can attract and aggregate tunas.

watershed has an important effect on the number of floating objects put into the ocean. The distribution of these objects in the ocean is affected by oceanographic and atmospheric factors.

Although there are some hypotheses about why the floating object-tuna school associations occur, they are not conclusive.

During 1992-1993, the Mexican tuna fleet recorded twenty-nine types of sightings of floating objects, most frequently at the mouth of the Gulf of California, off the coast of Peru, and in the area bordered by 0°-10°N and 90°-100°W; they were most frequently recorded from October to March.

Logs (parts oF trees) were the most common type of floating objects and, together with sets on bamboo, fish-aggregating devices (FADs-all objects that have been assembled by fishermen for the express purpose of attracting fish) and planks-boards, obtained the largest sizes of yellowfin tuna. In contrast, the largest skipjack were caught from sets on dead whales, kelp patties, planks-boards and pallets-crates.

The bycatch species most commonly associated with yellowfin and skipjack tuna caught on floating objects were sharks, other tuna and mahi-mahi.

Because of the problems with the principal mode of fishing, that is, fishing for tuna associated with dolphin, fishing on floating objects could be an alternative for the Mexican tuna fleet. However, before trying to apply more effort to this type of fishing it is necessary to conduct different types of studies to determine how to best catch tuna with minimal bycatch of the other species also associated with the objects, and to determine what sizes of tuna are most frequently caught.

RECENT SWFSC PUBLICATION

Editor's note: An abstract from a recently published paper written by a SWFSC scientist is presented in this space to announce its availability and to report results of tuna research conducted by Center staff.

ACCESS FEES AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC UNITED STATES PURSE SEINE TUNA FISHERY

Samuel F. Herrick Jr., Byron Rader and Dale Squires, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, California 92038-0271. *Published in* Marine Policy, *Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-96.*

Ideally, fees paid by distant water fishing nations for access to tuna resources in exclusive economic zones would approximate the net economic value of the tuna harvested, while leaving fishing operations profitable. This paper develops a linear programming approach to assess short-run profitability, optimum access fees and net economic benefits for US tropical tuna purse seiners operating under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. Results suggest that there is potential for sizable short-run profits and net economic benefits after payment of an access fee equal to the imputed marginal value of the tuna harvested.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNA FISHERIES

Editor's note: The following news items, compiled from fishery trade and industry journals, newspapers and NMFS reports, are provided only as a service to our readers. The NMFS does not guarantee their accuracy.

UNITED STATES

U.S. Canned Tuna Consumption Declines: U.S. consumption of canned tuna in 1996 was 3.2 pounds per capita, down from 3.4 pounds

the previous year, indicating that the industry has continued its free fall since the announcement of the dolphin-safe campaign in 1990. In his presentation at INFOFISH Tuna '97, Christopher Lischewski of StarKist outlined several possible reasons for the decline in U.S. consumption, including: (1) lack of advertising due to decreased profit margins which has affected the amount of money available. For the last three years, the combined amount spent on advertising by the three major brands (StarKist, Bumble Bee and Chicken of the Sea) is reported to have been less than $1 million; (2) Due to the decrease in advertising, consumer attitudes towards product quality, regardless of branded or private label, have also declined. Mr. Lischewski believes that it will require more advertising, new product offerings and improved quality to stimulate the market. Nevertheless canned tuna remains the dominant product in the consumption of canned seafoods in the U.S.

U.S.-Canada Tuna Vessel Port Privileges: On October 15, 1997, U.S. and Canadian officials announced that amendments had been accepted to a 1981 bilateral agreement to increase the number of ports that could be used by the other nation's tuna vessels. U.S. tuna vessels may now use Vancouver, B.C., in addition to previously agreed upon Canadian ports while Canadian tuna vessels may now use Eureka, Calif., Newport, Ore., and Westport, Wash., in addition to previously agreed upon U.S. ports. (Associated Press)

NOAA to Test Mandatory Tagging for Bluefin Tuna: Mandatory tags are required for 1998 on all recreationally caught Atlantic bluefin tuna landed in North Carolina before the fish can be removed from the vessel, under a pilot harvest tagging program requested in part by North Carolina anglers, officials with the NMFS announced. The mandatory tag requirement for recreationally caught Atlantic bluefin tuna was suggested by North Carolina anglers and others last year to account for every legal Atlantic bluefin tuna landed. This year's pilot program will test the effectiveness and cost of tagging Atlantic bluefin tuna throughout North Carolina. Both North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., and U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth strongly supported the pilot program. (NOAA Press Release, January 2, 1998)

UPCOMING TUNA MEETINGS

(Organizer; meeting type: sci=science, adm=administration)

- MAR 10-13. Intersessional on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance for the Multilateral negotiations for highly migratory species in the central and western Pacific. Suva, Fiji. (Forum Fisheries Agency; adm)
- MAR 30. Forum Fisheries Agency-U.S. South Pacific Tuna Treaty Consultation. Vava'u, Tonga. (FFA; adm)
- May 11-15. Workshop on Abundance Indices for Tropical Tuna Surface Fisheries. Miami, FL. (ICCAT; sci)
- May 18-21. 49th International Tuna Conference. Lake Arrowhead, CA. (NMFS; sci)
- JUN 1-6. Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish. Honolulu, HI. (South Pacific Commission; sci)

WESTERN PACIFIC

South Pacific Tuna: In late September 1997, the South Pacific's Forum Fisheries Agency held discussions with the U.S. Tuna Foundation and requested that the U.S. tuna fleet increase the proportion of Pacific Islander crewmembers on U.S. vessels from its current 15% to 50% over a five-year period. Discussions also included use of shore facilities by the U.S. tuna fleet and investment in island tuna processing. (Associated Press)

Bans on Japanese Tuna Fishing: On January 22, 1998, Australian officials announced that Australia would ban Japanese vessels from catching southern bluefin tuna in Australian waters after the three nations (Australia, New Zealand, and Japan) in the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna could not reach consensus on 1998 harvest quotas. On January 23, 1998, New Zealand officials announced that they would withhold southern bluefin tuna licenses for Japanese operators. Australia and New Zealand have announced that they will abide by 1997 quotas until new quotas are established. Japan sought an increased quota for 1998 and proposed a new experimental fishing program. (Dow Jones News, Reuters)

Greenpeace Accused of Endangering Lives: The environmental group Greenpeace was accused of endangering the lives of tuna fishing crews in its campaign to use inflatable boats to disrupt fishing operations off Australia's south coast. The campaign was aimed at halting the multi-million dollar southern bluefin tuna industry and coincided with an international meeting in Canberra to decide new quotas on bluefin catches. The fishing crews accused Greenpeace activists of "thuggery," piracy on the high seas and threatening their livelihoods by using the fast-moving dinghies, launched from their flagship, the *Rainbow Warrior*, to buzz the fishing boats and drive off schools of bluefin. The South Australian state government asked the federal government to investigate the campaign following an official complaint by the tuna fishermen to the Office of Marine Safety.

EASTERN PACIFIC

EU Considers Tariffs on Ecuadorian Tuna: On January 13, 1998, Spain asked the European Commission to investigate tuna imported from Ecuador, with the possibility of ordering a 24% tariff to this product. Such action is provided to protect EU production when tuna imports exceed certain limits. Both parties will provide information to the Commission by mid-February 1998. (Associated Press, January 21, 1998

Editor' note: With this issue we welcome Henry Orr to the Tuna Newsletter *team as our new art director. Henry replaces Ken Raymond who retired in January after 33 years of Federal Government service.*

Southwest Regional Office
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

William Hogarth, Director, Southwest Region

Southwest Fisheries Science Center
8604 La Jolla Shores Drive--P.O. Box 271
La Jolla, California 92038-0271

Michael F. Tillman, Science Director, Southwest Region
Gary Sakagawa, Tuna Program Coordinator

PUBLICATION STAFF

Alan Jackson, Editor
David Au, Reports
Henry Orr, Art Director

Send inquiries or comments to: Alan Jackson, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038-0271.
TEL: (619) 546-7048; FAX: (619) 546-7003; E-MAIL: ajackson@ucsd.edu
The *Tuna Newsletter* is also available on the Internet: http://swfsc.ucsd.edu/tunanews.html

LIBRARY, HONOLULU LABORATORY
NMFS/NOAA (F/SWC2)
2570 DOLE ST
HONOLULU HI 96822-2326

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
8604 LA JOLLA SHORES DR.- P.O. BOX 271
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92038-0271

U.S.OFFICIAL MAIL
U.S.POSTAGE ≈ 0.25 ¢
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE $300
P.S. METER 2310866
LA JOLLA CALIF.
BLK. RT.